

Deep Fire

Thursday, April 30, 2009 8:00 am

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Big Cypress National Preserve
33100 Tamiami Trail East
Ocohopee, FL 34141



Firefighters began to burnout line on the northeast section of the fire along Bear Island Grade yesterday. However an unexpected wind shift prevented the completion of this burn. One small spot fire was discovered and suppressed west of SH 29 near the north end of the fire. Tentative plans to open SH 29 north of the interstate were pushed back due to the unpredicted localized southeast winds. Those plans will be reevaluated today after the burnout is completed.

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Today

Fire Size: 28,000
Containment: 75%

Weather forecast calls for generally easterly winds with predicted high temperature around 90 degrees, however it also includes the wind shift to southeast which could impact the burning operations again. Crews will continue work to secure all fire lines, mop up the interior and watch for spot fires. The burnout that was started Wednesday to secure line south of Bear Island Grade will continue today. State Highway 29 north of I-75 will be reevaluated for opening following the burnout today. This will occur as quickly as fire suppression and smoke conditions allow safe traffic flow.

The Role of Fire & Management



Fire is a natural and necessary component of the habitats of the Big Cypress region. Pinelands and freshwater prairies require periodic fires to control the spread of shrubs and trees. Occasional burns help provide open habitat for the proliferation of herbaceous plants and the wildlife that depend on them. Big Cypress National Preserve serves as important habitat for a variety of wildlife. These floral and faunal species have evolved in coexistence with wildlife in the ecosystem.

The fire management team of Big Cypress National Preserve actively utilizes fire to maintain the integrity of several local ecosystems, reduce fuel loads in susceptible areas, and create buffers to hamper wildfires.

Area and Road Closures

I-75 and SH 29 **south** of I-75 to US 41 remain open. However all motorists are encouraged to continue to exercise caution when driving through these areas. **We regret that SH 29 will remain closed north of I-75 to Oil Well Road.** This is due to un-predicted localized winds that prevented the completion of the planned burnout yesterday. It will be reevaluated this evening after the burning operations are concluded. In the interest of safety, Big Cypress National Preserve has enacted some recreational access closures. These are necessary to ensure the safety of visitors and fire personnel. All areas in the Bear Island Unit, and all areas north of Fire Prairie Trail, including the trail itself, in the Deep Lake Unit are closed.